

species. They may not be new, or they may not be species at all,—but they will be *known*; and any mistake which has been committed will be at once rectified,—any new name which has been wrongly imposed, immediately degraded to a synonym.

Accordingly I have been careful in this respect; and I have in some instances, given full descriptions, even of species which are certainly not new, but which I did not find described by previous authors with all the detail that was requisite for completely identifying them; or, leaving out what they have noticed, I have added such characters as they have omitted. My main object has been to render all the species, whether rightly named or not, easily recognizable; and, however little the science may be advanced by what is brought forward, to make that advance, so far as it goes, sure.

The method of description, and the mode of computing the fin-ray formula, will be found conformable to the plan adopted in the “*Histoire des Poissons*” of Cuvier and Valenciennes; a work which, in so many respects, must always serve as a model to labourers in this department of zoology.

The colours, in the great majority of instances, were, fortunately, noticed by Mr. Darwin in the recent state. The nomenclature employed by him for the purpose is that of Patrick Syme; and he informs me, that a comparison was always made with the book in hand, previous to the exact colour in any case being noted. Where I have observed any markings left unnoticed by Mr. Darwin, I have added them myself; and, in most instances, I have given the general disposition of the colours as they appear in spirits, from the circumstance of their being often so much altered by the liquor, and liable to mislead those, who have only the opportunity of seeing them in preserved specimens. This is what Cuvier and Valenciennes have frequently done in their work; and from them I have borrowed the practice.

In a work of this nature, it has not been thought desirable to enter into any discussion of the principles of scientific arrangement, or to effect any change in systems already received; its main object being the description of species. For this reason, I have taken the groups almost exactly as they stand in the “*Histoire des Poissons*” of Cuvier and Valenciennes, or in the “*Regne Animal*” of the former: yet there is reason to believe that many parts of their system will be found hereafter to require some modification, especially in regard to families and genera which have for their distinctive character the presence or absence of vomerine or palatine teeth. The small value which is to be attached to such character is pointed out in some instances in the following work, and much dwelt upon.

In conclusion, it may be stated, that the whole of the species in the collection of fish brought home by Mr. Darwin, described in the following pages, have been deposited by him in the Museum of the Philosophical Society of Cambridge. They are mostly in spirit, and, generally speaking, in a good state of preservation; some few, however, are in the state of skins only, and have been mounted.

L. JENYNS.

Swaffham Bulbeck,
Jan. 8, 1842.